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NSC Briefing Note

THE OUTLOOK FOR COMPLETING RATIFICATION OF THE EDC TREATY

A. Summary of the Present Situation

France

- The French situation, which looks markedly better than four weeks ago, continues to be the crux of the whole problem.

I will return to this in a moment.

West Germany

- Both houses of parliament ratified last spring.
- Constitutional Court now deliberating the legality of both Bonn and Paris treaties, but generally expected to follow the 6 September election returns.
- If not, Adenauer can probably muster a two-thirds majority for the necessary modifications of the constitution.
- Lower house ratified by two-thirds majority in July.

Netherlands

- Upper house may take its time, but its final approval is generally expected, possibly by the end of the year.

Belgium

- Both houses expected to make EDC the first order of business when they reconvene - lower house on 6 October, upper house in November.

State Department review completed

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- Final approval not considered in doubt and Belgian government believes this may be attained in 1953.

Luxembourg

- Approval expected to follow Belgium's

Italy

- The one country where prospects now look actually worse than they did last spring, when De Gasperi promised to push the treaty through parliament this year.
- Several reasons for this decline in ratification prospects:

(1) De Gasperi's poor showing in the June elections was widely attributed to his previous close cooperation on US-sponsored policies.

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(2) The present Pella government is only a provisional one

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(3) Trieste has become an even more burning issue with Italian public.

Pella told Ambassador Luce on 3 September that a favorable solution was now a precondition for Italian EDC ratification.

(4) And finally, similar public pressures are building up against ~~any~~ any measures risking war and against further

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These pressures are already being manifested in a growing lack of co-operativeness in Italy's relation with us.

- Hence a date for EDC debate is not even being discussed at this time.
- But Italy seems to recognize that European integration is to its long term interest, economically and defense-wise; it is already a member of the Coal-Steel Community.
- Hence Italy not likely to be held-out once the other participating countries have all ratified.

B. To return to the more ~~xxx~~ critical problem in France:

German elections of 6 Sep a turning point

- The shift of French government policy in the second half of September was striking.

Before German elections, a black picture

- The Laniel government was committed to no schedule on EDC ratification
- Foreign Minister Bidault appeared under the influence of elements tending to retard rather than promote integration.
- The enemies of EDC were organizing an aggressive opposition

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- France and Germany seemed deadlocked on the Saar.

Previous Mayer government had made a settlement a firm condition for French ratification of EDC

- Worst of all, the French public seemed in a psychological rut on the subject of EDC, apparently accepting the argument that

Before they could bind themselves more closely to the Germans, the French must regain a position of strength

Hence Germany's growing ^{economic} ~~strength~~ predominance made the French fret over their financial and trade difficulties, the drain of the Indochina war, and the challenge to their position in North Africa

In addition they saw a possibility of American defense economies making the US less reliable as a stabilizing force in Europe.

- On 9 September, Under Secretary of State Maurice Schumann told Ambassador Dillon with enthusiasm -

The elections had provided "a much needed

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*change of
atmosphere
after 6 Sept.*

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On 15 September Bidault assured

Dillon that, given a Saar settlement-

He was now convinced France would
ratify EDC before the end of the
year, and

He was "prepared to devote his full
time to accomplishing this result"

- Dillon commented:

"This position by Bidault is a
dramatic change of front.
While he has always maintained
his support for EDC, he has
never before given a date for
ratification."

- On 17 September Dillon noted that there
was now

"keen competition between
Laniel and Bidault as to who
can do most to get EDC through."

- On 26 September, Laniel announced
publicly that

to
He would ask Parliament to ratify
EDC as soon as outstanding differences
with Germany were settled at the
anticipated early meeting between
Bidault and Adenauer

French ratifica-
tion now seems to
depend on

- (1) An understanding on the Saar
- (2) Satisfying the Socialist Party
on

A European Political Community
with real supranational powers

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Close British association

with EDC

**(3) Avoidance of a new cabinet
crisis**

**(4) Coping successfully with up-
setting developments abroad,
e.g., a failure of the Navarre
Plan in Indochina, unforeseen
Soviet initiatives**

(To take up these points one by one--)

**(1) Prospects for
Saar settlement**

**- Negotiations, which last spring reached
agreement on the principle of "European-
izing" the territory, are to be resumed
in mid-October.**

**- Adenauer's electoral victory gives him
greater leeway to make concessions on the
chief remaining stumbling block--France's
economic position in the Saar.**

**He is already publicly on record as
realizing France cannot give this up
entirely**

**(2) Problem of
insuring Social-
ist support**

**- Government needs over 300 National
Assembly votes to put EDC across there,
but can count on only about 250 from
the parties in the coalition.**

**Several ex-Gaullist cabinet members
threatened in mid-September to resign**

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on the European integration issue.

- Government therefore looks to the Socialist party as the most promising source of the needed additional votes
Believes that under proper conditions it can swing about 80 of the 104 deputies of this party.

- The Socialist demands are:

(1) Close British "association"

with EDC on which London now appears to have satisfied the Socialist party leader.

(2) That the proposed Political Community now under international discussion, be given "real" or supranational authority for controlling German power.

- Socialist position therefore now seems to depend on a considerable firming up of the instructions sent to the French delegation now negotiating in Rome

These instructions apparently cannot be clarified without a resolution of the struggle now dividing the French cabinet on the whole question of France's policy on European integration.

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(3) Avoidance of
cabinet crisis

- Overthrow of the Laniel government would probably mean a prolonged and serious crisis.

Next regime would need time to develop its own strategy on the treaty

- There are various indications that Laniel will stay in power at least till mid-December, but he faces real threats from:

(1) The persistent budgetary difficulties

(2) Labor's hostility flaring up in the August strikes and still strong;

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(3) Laniel's own directness carried over from his business career

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(4) Coping successfully with developments abroad



- ~~Hope~~ EDC ratification will depend also on such developments abroad as

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**(1) The fate of the Navarre plan
in Indochina**

**(2) Further Soviet initiatives
toward a detente in the cold war**

In conclusion

- Even if all goes well in the National Assembly, there is one further factor which may delay French ratification until early 1954.

This is the upper house of Parliament which is highly conservative and includes many able critics of the treaty.

Under its prerogatives, it could hold up ratification as long as two months.

Such a further delay might mean a crippling loss of the momentum imparted by the Adenauer victory in September